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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
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INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1453  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9574  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8887  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7733  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1604  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0643  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0282  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC

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SUBJECT: AWAMI LEAGUE HOPES FOR ELECTION IN EARLY APRIL

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Geeta Pasi; Reason 1.4(d)

11. (C) On January 18, Major General (R) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, head of security for Awami League president Sheikh Hasina, presented to poloff a one-page Caretaker Government "work schedule" that culminates in the holding of parliamentary elections on April 3. He said he generated the document after army contacts opposed to prolonged military involvement in government showed him a three-page strategy paper outlining the army's goals over the course of a long-term government of national unity. The paper, he said, discussed an anti-corruption campaign and the need for photo voter ID cards in the context of justifying a prolonged Caretaker Government tenure.

12. (C) Siddique's schedule omits the provision of photo voter ID cards, which he argues in a note are unnecessary and impractical, and he calls only for an updated, not a new, voter list. Hasina, he claimed, has endorsed the schedule, but that for now only a handful of senior party leaders are aware of this development.

13. (C) The specifics of the "Proposed Work Schedule for New Care-Taker Government" are:

- Reconstitution of the Election Commission by January 20
- Voter List updating begins by January 25
- Completion of the Voter List and display for any corrections by March 1
- Announcement of Election Schedule by March 2
- Completion of the corrected final voter list by March 15
- Election Day on April 3.

14. (C) Comment: Awami League contacts are consistently suggesting to us a late March/early April timeframe for elections, which implicitly acknowledges that significant reforms, including a photo voter ID system, are not essential for a free and fair election. The existence of an army strategy paper proposing a long-term interim government is consistent with mounting evidence that the military, the clear power behind the throne, envisages a much broader agenda and timeframe than just preparing the country for elections as soon as possible.

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